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**SCHAKOWSKY URGES COMMITTEE TO PASS EFFECTIVE, SCIENCE-BASED
LEGISLATION TO PROTECT AMERICANS FROM DANGEROUS POLLUTANTS**

WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky, a member of the Environment and Hazardous Materials Subcommittee, at a hearing before the Subcommittee today urged her colleagues to pass legislation which would protect Americans from Persistent Organic Pollutants, hazardous chemicals that threaten public health and the environment.

Schakowsky's opening statement is below:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Ranking Member Solis, for holding this markup today. On March 2nd this committee held the second of two hearings to discuss the threat that Persistent Organic Pollutants, which are commonly referred to as POPs, pose to public health and the environment. We heard from experts who reaffirmed that POPs are exceedingly toxic chemicals that may take years to break down in the environment and can travel long distances.

The use of these chemicals anywhere around the world is a threat to the health of our nation. Effectively protecting the public health from POPs is only possible through international agreements. I believe that we all agree that Congress has a duty to amend our laws so that the U.S. can be an active partner in international efforts to protect the public and the environment from these hazards.

I am concerned, however, that the bill before us today will make it difficult, if not impossible, to properly regulate POPs in the United States. H.R. 4591 seems to have been designed to preempt states' authority to regulate substances that become subject to the treaty. The bill also sets a new cost-benefit standard that must be met before the U.S. can regulate a newly-listed POP. It is my feeling that the EPA will never be able to regulate such a cost-benefit standard, therefore making it impossible to protect us from additional pollutants. In addition, I am concerned that the bill lacks strong enough language to force a timely implementation of a POPs Convention decision.

I am also disappointed upset about the lack of bipartisan cooperation that preceded this markup. Cooperation on this issue is not only important so that we can protect the health of all of our constituents, but bipartisan cooperation will be necessary when the Stockholm Convention is ratified by the Senate.

Instead of adopting H.R. 4591, I urge the committee to accept the Solis substitute. The Solis bill implements the Convention and its science-based process in an effective, efficient way which supports the intent of the treaty and which will protect health from the effects of the world's most toxic pollutants. It both preserves the sovereignty of the United States and tracks the Stockholm

Convention treaty language, which is supported by industry, public health groups and environmental groups, was negotiated under the Clinton Administration and signed by President Bush in a Rose Garden Ceremony in 2001. Its science- based standard supports the intent of the treaty and will help protect public health here at home. The language offered by Ranking Member Solis is what we should adopt today and we should all work to get it to the full House.